

The POPISH DOCTRINE *of* *Doing* Evil
that Good *may* Come,

Considered in a

S E R M O N

Preach'd at

W A R E *in* Hertfordshire.

By *W. WEBSTER*, D. D.

Vicar of WARE and THUNDRIDGE.



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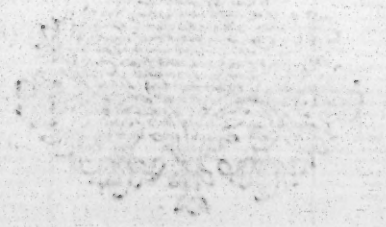
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TO the RIGHT HONOURABLE
ARTHUR ONSLOW, Esq;
S P E A K E R
OF THE
HOUSE of COMMONS.

S I R,

WHEN I had last the Honour of Waiting on You, I communicated to You a Design of Writing a Discourse concerning the *Popish* Doctrine of *Doing Evil that Good may Come*, being persuaded, that nothing can be more Seasonable, or better calculated to excite a just Abhorrence of *Poper*y; and that, hitherto, notwithstanding the Number of Excellent Writings against it, the Doctrine

DEDICATION.

now under Consideration has not been so fully opened and exposed as it deserves to be. Your Approbation of my Scheme determined Me to an immediate Execution of it, as Your Character and Situation induced Me to Address it to You. You are at the Head of a *British, Protestant* Parliament ; You are animated with a true *British Zeal* for the Religion of your Country, for private Judgment, and Liberty of Conscience. Where, then, could I find a Person more likely, or more able to Countenance and Recommend This Sermon, than one who is so well affected to the Subject of it, whose Popularity and Station give so wide a Circle to his Influence : And I have the greater Hopes of your Encouragement from the *Manner* which I have carefully observed in writing on this Occasion, as well as from the Importance and Seasonableness of my Doctrine. As to the *Argumentative* Part,

I

DEDICATION.

I have aimed at Clearness, Conciseness, and Strength. As to the *Manner* of Writing, I have studied to preserve a true *Christian Temper* and a *just Decorum*, being of Opinion, that there is no Religion, nor Conviction in Bitterness and Ill-manners. I desire always to have my Zeal such as I apprehend Yours to be, a *Warmth* limited by Justice, and tempered with Charity. If I have used any Asperity of Language, it is towards their *Principles* and *Practices*, and not their *Persons*; and it was impossible in proper Colours to paint their Deformity without using such Expressions as are significant of their Nature. If I have expressed a bad Opinion of the *Intention* of their *Guides* and *Governors*, their avowed *Principles* and *Practices* extorted it from me, notwithstanding the great Pleasure which I take in thinking well of Mankind; and the End of this Publication made it necessary for Me to de-

DEDICATION.

declare my Sentiments freely; but I have done it as decently as possibly I could, without doing it ineffectually. Such as it is, I beg your Acceptance and Recommendation of it; and am,

S I R,

Your Respectful,

and

Obliged Humble Servant,

WILL. WEBSTER.

R O M. iii. 7, 8.

*For if the Truth of G O D hath more
abounded through my Lye, unto his
Glory, why yet am I also judged as a
Sinner ;*

*And not rather, (as we be slanderously
reported, and as some affirm that we
say) Let us do Evil that Good may
come.*

THIS is an Objection that *St. Paul*, in
the Person of an *Unbeliever*, urges
against the Doctrine which he was
there advancing. There is no Neces-
sity for spending any Time in enquiring into
the Doctrine which gave Occasion for this Ob-
jection. The Objection contains, in itself, an
absolute Position, which the *Apostle* expressly con-
demns as *false*, and the Imputation of it to the
Christians as a *Slander*. The Position is This;
that it is lawful *to do Evil*, that *Good may come*,
or, that we may use *bad Means* in the Prosecu-
tion of a *good End*. This is a Position *avowed-
ly maintained* by the *Jesuits*, and often practis-
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ed by some *Protestants* who *disown* it; and, therefore, a particular Examination of it shall be the Subject of my present Discourse.

If we consider the Words with a *Critical Exactness*, the *Doing of Evil* that *Good* may come, or a *right Use of unlawful Means* in the Prosecution of a *Good End*, is a *Contradiction in Terms*, and an *utter Impossibility*. It is, in short, the same thing as to say, that *Evil* is *Good*, or that a Thing may be *unlawful* and *lawful* at the same Time. If it be *justifiable* to use any Means towards an End, it cannot be *sinful* to use them; and if not *sinful*, Then *no Evil*. If the Use of any Means be *sinful*, *absolutely* so, the *End* must partake of the *natural Turpitude* of the *Means*.—The Meaning therefore must be This; that Actions, which would, otherwise, be *Evil* or *Sinful*, become not only *lawful* but *commendable* and *meritorious* when practised as the *Means* of doing some *Great Good*.—Now, as I purpose to apply my Discourse on This Subject particularly to the *Church of Rome*, I shall observe the following Method :

I. I shall enquire what Those *Evil* or *Sinful* Actions are which the *Church of Rome* practises as the *Means of Doing Good*, and what That *Good* is which she promotes by the Use of Them.

II. I shall endeavour to shew that no *End*, how *Good* soever, can *sanctify* such *Means*; and, consequently, that no *Authority whatsoever* can warrant the Use of Them.

III.

III. I shall prove that the *Bible*, from whence alone all *Authority* of that kind must be derived, is flatly against Them in this Point.

First, then, I am to enquire what those *Evil* or *Sinful* Actions are which the *Church* of *Rome* practises as the *Means* of *Doing Good*, and what *That Good* is which she promotes by the Use of Them.—And, *here*, while I am preaching against the Practices of the *Church* of *Rome*, God forbid that I should so far dishonour the *Protestant* Name as to use the same *indirect* Means in the Service of our Religion which I so freely condemn in others. To *misrepresent* Persons, Things, or Actions, in *Favour* or *Disfavour* of any Cause or Party, whatever be the *Intention*, whatever the *Character*, whatever the *Station* of the Person who practises such Means, they are in their *Nature* absolutely *Immoral* and *Unchristian*, and such as we can have no good Reasons to think that a *God* of *invariable Truth* and *Fidelity* will bless with his Assistance. Under This awful Sense of the inviolable Regard which is due to *Veracity* and *Sincerity*, I shall advance nothing but what I apprehend to be strictly true, according to the best Information that I have been able to get. But to come to the Point. They make Use of *Frauds*, and impose upon the Ignorant by *Counterfeit Miracles*; They make Use of *private Misrepresentations* of their *Doctrines* and *Worship* and *Discipline* in order to make *Converts*. They not only practise *Equivocations*

and *mental Reservations*, which are *virtual Lies*, as being intended to *Deceive People*, but *false Declarations* of their *real Designs*, which are *direct Lies*. Breach of the *firmest Promises*, nay, a Violation of the most *Solemn Oaths*, are some of Those Means, those *notoriously Evil and Sinful Means*, which, it seems, acquire the *greatest Sanctity* when employed in the Service of *their Church*, forasmuch as no *Faith* ought to be kept with *Hereticks*. If the *Dethroning* and *Murdering* of *Princes*, if the Destruction of the *whole Legislature*, of *their dearest Friends* and *nearest Relations*, be thought subservient to the *Grand Cause*, the Obligations of Obedience to the *Civil Magistrate* become canceled, the Bonds of Society, the Softer Ties of *Humanity* and *natural Affection* are all broken, and the *Sword*, or any other the most cruel Instruments of *Death* and *Desolation* receive a *pious Commission* to do its Work. The *Wrack*, or any other Method of *Torturing the Body* is used as a Means of *Converting* and *Saving the Soul*. Nay, would you believe it? The *Good* of the *Common Cause* can *Sanctify worse Means*, more *Inhuman* and more *Cruel Means*, even than *These*. His *Holiness*, for the Sake of so good an *End*, can grant *Commissions* to the *Church* to kill the *Soul* by their *Sacred Curses*. In the Use of the other Methods of *Cruelty* They may have the *Pretence*, at least, of Intending Them as Instruments of promoting the *Eternal Welfare* of Those whom They use so harshly, but I see not what *Good* they can propose to do
 Them

Them by calling upon all the Powers in *Heaven* to join in consigning them over to *Hell*.

Thus, my Brethren, I have given you a short Narrative of the chief of those *evil Means* which the *Church of Rome* employs under the Notion of *doing Good*. According to the best of my Knowledge I have done them no Injustice in the Relation, but given you only what I apprehend to be undeniable Fact. Neither shall I attempt, by any Arts of *Rhetorick*, to inflame your *Passions*. I want no more at present than to inform your *Understandings*, and convince your *Judgments*. And, therefore, before we proceed any farther, let us coolly consider how *much Evil* is contain'd in *these Means of doing Good*.

If *Insincerity*, *Deceit*, and *Fraud*; if *Breach of Faith* and *Violation of Oaths*; if every Instrument of *Cruelty*; if *Rebellion* and *Murder*; if all these, or any other the like Practices, may be us'd under the Pretence of *Religion*, what infinite Disorder and Confusion and Misery must they produce, nay, *have produc'd*, in *Society*. There is an End of all mutual *Trust* and *Confidence*, upon which depends the very Life of every Sort of *Commerce*, *Friendship*, and *Conversation*. No Man can be secure in the Enjoyment of his *Liberty*, *Property*, or *Life*. No *Prince* can be secure upon his *Throne*, every body and every thing is at the absolute Disposal of the *infallible Chair*. And, therefore, it seems to me to be a very impolitick thing in any *Prince* to suffer such Doctrines to be propagated in his Kingdom. For, *Ambition* and
Ava-

Avarice and *Resentment* are very *capricious* things; and no *Prince* can tell how soon this *absolute Creator* of *Right* and *Wrong*, for private Reasons, may want to get him out of the Way; and, then, what should hinder him from granting *secret* Commissions to any of his Subjects to *poison*, or *assassinate* him? *Popish Princes*, unless they will be solely at the Disposal of the *sovereign Pontif*, are in as much Danger of being *depos'd*, as their *Subjects* are of being *persecuted* by *them* when they refuse to profess the *Popish Religion*.—Neither is this the whole of their Danger. For, tho' the *Pope* assumes to himself the sole Power of granting *Dispensations* for these Practices, when once the *People* are in Possession of the *dispensing Doctrine*, it is not to be supposed that every *Enthusiast* will wait for a Commission from *Rome*, but apply the Doctrine in a *discretionary* Way. They are taught that the *End sanctifies the Means*, and, therefore, if they can but convince themselves (and we know by fatal Experience how easily *Enthusiasm* can work private Conviction) that they are promoting the *Glory of God*, and they are instantly at Liberty to do whatever they please.—I would observe, too, that the *Pope himself* is not out of the Reach of the mischievous Tendency of this Doctrine; for *Popish Princes* may, and have been, out of Humour with their *spiritual Head*, as well as *Pagan* and *Mahometan* Emperors, and think it for the *Honour of God*, and the *Good of the Church*, to displace him, and put another in his room.—And, suppose, this Doctrine should obtain

obtain among *Pagan* and *Mahometan Princes*; what Havock might it make! What Wars and Comotions might it kindle! What universal Confusion might it produce! Nation rising up against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom; and all this Mischief done for the *Glory of God*. Or, Suppose the *People* of any of those Nations should believe, with the *Papists*, that no *Faith*, or *Justice*, is to be observ'd towards those of another Religion, This wou'd put an End to all *Trade* and *Commerce* unless with one another, among Those of the *Same Faith*.—In short, the Doctrine of *Doing Evil that Good may Come* is calculated to destroy all the *Peace and Happiness* of *Human Society*.

And, now, what is the *Good* that the *Church of Rome* proposes to do by these *Evil Means*? They will, no doubt, give for Answer, what I have already observ'd, that They thereby promote the *Glory of God*.

For Argument Sake I will take it for granted that They are *Sincere* in This Profession; and ask, *How* the *Glory of God* is Thus promoted; to which They can make no other pertinent Reply than saying, that They thereby promote the Belief of the *Doctrines*, a Conformity to the *Worship*, and Obedience to the *Discipline* of their *Church*, which, as They think, is for the *Glory of God*, as it is propagating the *true Religion* and the *Salvation of Mankind*.

But, in the 1st Place, let any one consider what *natural Tendency* there can be in any of these Things to work a *Rational Conviction*? By *deceitful Misrepresentations* They may Soften
some

some Points of their Religion in Order to induce People to Embrace it; and, when They *have* Embraced it under a *false* Shape, They may *Compel* Them to *profess* it as it *really* is; but This is not *Convincing* the *Judgment* of the *Truth* of any Part of their Religion, and there can be no *true Religion* without a *Rational Conviction*. By *false* Declarations of their Designs They may seduce unwary Persons into their *Party*, and so strengthen their *Interest*; by *Breach* of *Promises* and *Violation* of *Oaths*, by *Rebellion* and *Murder*, They may be able to *Establish* their *External Communion*; by the Help of *Violence* They may propagate an *Outward Profession*, but not the *Internal Belief* of it, which, *only*, deserves the Name of *Religion*; so that These Practices are not only *Evil* and *Sinful* in *Themselves*, as They are a *Violation* of the Duties of *Natural Religion*, and destructive of the Peace and Good Government of the World; They are not only incapable of promoting any Religion at all, as carrying no *real Evidence* along with Them; but They *acquire* an *exceeding* Degree of *Evil* and *Sinfulness* by being the Means of producing *Irreligion* and *Infidelity*; of *Dishonouring* God instead of *promoting* his Glory, by inducing People, out of *Fear* or *Interest*, to be guilty of the most solemn, habitual, and repeated Acts of *Hypocrisy* and *Prevarication*. I say, this is the *Natural Tendency* of such Means; from whence, and not from their *Accidental* Effects, we are to judge of their *Goodness*, or *Badness*.

But,

But, whatever *good Effects* they may *seem* calculated to produce, I shall now endeavour to shew,

2dly, That no *End*, how *good soever*, can *sanctify* such *Means*; and, consequently, that no *Authority whatsoever* can warrant the Use of them. I say, no *End*, how *good soever*, can *sanctify* such *Means*, so as to make it *lawful* to use them; and the Reason is, because they are a Violation of the *eternal* and *immutable* Law of *Nature*, grounded upon the *unalterable Relation* and *Reason* of Things. The *Wisdom* that is visible in every Part of the *Creation*, the *Fitness* that appears in them as a *Mean* to an *End*, is a plain Argument that the World did not *accidentally tumble* into such an exquisitely beautiful and harmonious Order, but was form'd by an *intelligent* Being; and the plentiful Provision which this Order of Things makes for us in *this* Life, shews the abundant *Goodness* of the *Creator*. Now, as the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of the *Creation* demonstrate the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of the *Creator*, they are, likewise, a Proof, equally demonstrative, that it must be the *Will* of the *Creator* that all his *Creatures* should act agreeably to this *Order* and these several *Relations* of Things, or else we must suppose that a *wise* and *good* Being appointed them as *Means* towards *wise* and *good Ends* without ever intending that those Ends should be *answered*; which is a Supposition as *absurd*, as it is *blasphemous*.

It appears very plainly, from the *Nature of Man*, that he is *fitted*, and, consequently, *intended* for *Society*; and, therefore, it must be the *Will of God* that we should observe those Rules without which the *Ends of Society* cannot be *answered*. It will not be expected that I should attempt to *prove* such *self-evident* Things, as, that *Sincerity* in our Words and Actions, *Fidelity* in our Dealings, *Veracity* in our ordinary Conversation and Declarations, a punctual Performance of *Promises*, and a strict regard to *Oaths*, mutual Assistance and Endeavours to make each other *Happy*, a dutiful Obedience to *Government*, and a reverential Regard to the Life and Safety of *Governors*; I say, I need not *prove* that these Things are *necessary* towards the wise and good *Ends of Society*; and, if the Observation of these Rules *be necessary* towards the *Ends of Society*, and the *Nature of Man* assures me that we are *fitted* and *intended* for *Society*, I am from *hence* absolutely certain that it is the *Will of my Creator* that I *should* observe them. These Rules, therefore, are *unalterable* because founded on the *immutable Nature and Relations* of Things, and it is impossible that any *subsequent* Obligation should supercede this *prior* and *eternal* One; or that any *Authority*, for any *other* Ends, destructive of the *Ends of Society*, should be able to warrant the *Violation* of them.—This, then, being the Case (and it is a very clear one;) How comes the *Pope* by a Power of *dispensing*.

dispensing with the Observation of these Laws? I suppose, he will not think it *impertinent* in us *Protestants* to ask him to *prove* his Claim. From *Reason*, I presume, he will not pretend to derive it, but from *Revelation*. I will not at present enquire, *who* is the proper *Interpreter* of the *Meaning* of Revelation; whether there be in every *Christian* a Right of *private* Interpretation, or whether *Christianity* has appointed any *infallible* Interpreter to judge of the *Meaning* of *Scripture* for us. For the Present let it be suppos'd that after we have believ'd, upon the Authority of the *Scriptures*, the *Infallibility* of the *Pope*, the *Words* of the *New Testament*, as to all other Points, become so many *unintelligible*, or, as they express it, *unincens'd Characters*, till he shall be so good as to explain the Sense of them. Yet, as bad a Thing as *Reason* is in a *private Christian*, every one must be allowed the Use of it in inquiring into the *Truth* of *Christianity*, or else it is impossible for any one to *believe* it. For, *Faith* implies an *Assent* of the *Mind* or *Understanding*, and there can be no *Assent* of the *Understanding* without some *Evidence*, or *Reasons* to effect such a Perswasion. Now, if there be such a Thing as *Reason*, I cannot have a *rational* Conviction of any Thing's being *true* which is *contrary* to the *first and clearest Principles* of *Reason*. How, then, will the *Pope* be able

to give me *reasonable* Grounds to *believe* that it is the *Will* of God that *he* should have a Power to grant a Man a *Dispensation* to *deceive*, to *lie*, to *break his Promise*, to *falsify his Oaths*, to *rebel* and *murder his lawful Prince*, or to *call upon God his Saints and Angels to damn* any one? He will say, no doubt, that God express'd *That* to be his Will in his *Holy Word*. But, what *Reason* can I have to *believe That* to be the *Word of God*? For, as I said before, if there be any such Thing as *Reason*, my Reason assures me, in as clear a Manner as it is possible for it to do in *any Case whatsoever*, that it is the *plain Will* of God that I should act quite otherwise. An *external Revelation* contradictory to *Reason* is an *Impossibility in Nature*; because *Reason* is the *Will of God* made *known* to us in a *natural Way*; and we may with Reverence to the *Deity* affirm that even God cannot *reveal* to us *contrary Truths*. And, as all *external Revelation* must suppose some *antecedent Reason* by which we may judge of the Truth of it, if you set aside the Authority of *Reason*, there will be no Means left whereby to try it; and, consequently, it would be impossible that God should ever *reveal* himself to his Creatures at all; and, I am fully perswaded, because it is a very natural Consequence, that grounding *irrational Doctrines* and *Practices* upon the *Authority* of the *Christian Religion*, has occasioned a

Multitude

Multitude of unthinking and injudicious People to disbelieve the *Truth* of it.

I hope, I have sufficiently prov'd that the *Church of Rome* makes use of such *Means* for the Propagation of their Religion as are *unalterably sinful*, because *unalterably evil* in their *Nature*, and for That Reason never to be warranted by any Authority, on any Account whatsoever. But,

3dly, It is not only clear, from the common Principles of *Reason*, that such Practices cannot be warranted by an external *Revelation*, because *contrary* to a *prior Revelation*, made known to Us by the *Nature* and *Relations of Things*, which is *equally* a Revelation with an *External* One though made in a *different* Manner, but it is, likewise, as plain from the *Bible* that they are *Sinful*. — Whatever Pretences the *Papists* may urge for the Necessity of an *infallible Judge* in *Controversial* Points of an *abstruse* Nature, surely Persons of an *Ordinary* Capacity, without any such *Extraordinary* Assistance, may be able to understand those plain Passages of *Scripture* which relate to the common Duties of *Morality*. It would be very strange, indeed, if the *Infallible Spirit* of God should make a *Revelation* which is to be the *Rule* of our Actions in the *ordinary* Affairs of *private* and *social* Life, and, yet, that This *common* Rule should stand in need of an *infallible Man* to interpret it. If, then, the *Papists* will

will be so kind as only to allow that by embracing *Christianity* we do not immediately lose the Use of our *natural Faculties*, we may be able to Understand those Parts of the *Bible* that concern the *Common Conduct* of our Lives, as well as we can understand any other Book that is written with a tolerable Degree of Perspicuity and Propriety of Expression. And, if This be so, I am very well assured that in the *Old Testament* the Practice of the *Moral Duties*, those very Duties which the *Papists* violate by their Methods of propagating their Religion, is strongly pressed, and the Violation of them represented as highly displeasing to God. Nay, God has *There* expressly declared, not only that he would *Visit* for the Breach of Them, but that he *had* done it (as I have on another Occasion proved to you*.) Now, *God* and *Moral Duties* still continuing to be of the same *Immutable Nature*, the Breach of any of Them must always be as displeasing to his Purity and Holiness as ever it was.

If we descend from the Declarations of God's Will, as we find them in the Books of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, to a much *Greater Prophet*, the *Evangelical Preacher* of Righteousness, the *Son of God*, *Christ Jesus*, He has told us that the grand Design of his coming into the World was to *Explain*, and *Improve*, and *Inforce* the *Moral Law*, which he has done in his Divine Sermon on the Mount, of which

* In my *Fast Sermon* lately published in a Vol. of *Traacts*.

which he assures us, that *not one jot or Tittle should fail*; that he came to *Redeem* us from our *Immoralities*, as well as from the *Punishment* of Them in the *next Life*. Those *Duties*, in particular, which his *Holiness* pretends to have a *Power of Cancelling*, are particularly *distinguished* both by the *Precepts* and *Example* of the Blessed *Jesus* and his *Apostles*; such as, the strictest *Sincerity* and *Veracity*; the greatest *Simplicity* of *Mind* and *Manners*; the most punctual *Fidelity*; *Brotherly Love*, especially to *Fellow Christians*; *Obedience* to *Government*, even when the *Powers* in being were *worse* than *Hereticks*, when they were *Pagans*, when they were *Idolaters*, when they were *Persecutors* of *Christianity*.

But, This is not all; (tho' one would think This should be enough to satisfy any reasonable Person) the Practice of the *Moral Law*, especially Those Parts of it which the *Papists* violate under a Pretence of *Piety*, are not only insisted upon as *indispensable*, both in the *Old* and *New Testament*, but there are many Places where the *Preference* is given to the *Moral Law* above any other Part of Religion, as being of greater Excellency and more acceptable to *God*, than any Matters of a *positive*, though *Divine* Institution. The *Papists* are for setting aside the most essential Parts of *Morality* for the sake of promoting Points of *Speculation*, *Discipline* and *Worship*, but hear the *Prophet*; a Person undoubtedly

Infallible, a Person *truly inspired*, and who *proved* his Divine Inspiration by *real Miracles*. “ To what Purpose is the Multitude
 “ of your Sacrifices to me, bring no more
 “ vain Oblations, Incense is an Abomination
 “ to me, the new Moons and Sabbaths, the
 “ Calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with ;
 “ it is Iniquity, even the Solemn Meeting,
 “ &c.” and what is the Reason of all this ?
 Because they were defective in the *Moral* Duties of Religion, for so it follows ; “ Wash
 “ you, make you clean, put away the Evil
 “ of your Doings, seek Judgment, relieve the
 “ oppressed, &c. *Isaiah* lxvi. 3.” The Prophet tells Them that nothing could be more abominable than their *Sacrifices* while they allowed themselves in *Immoralities*. To the same Purpose the Prophet *Jer.* ch. vii. 4, 5.
 “ Trust ye not in *Lying* Words, saying the
 “ *Temple of the Lord*, the *Temple of the Lord*,
 “ &c. thoroughly amend your Doings, execute Judgment between a Man and his
 “ Neighbour, oppress not the Stranger, the
 “ Fatherless and the Widow, and shed not
 “ *Innocent Blood.*” Here we see what it was in the *Jewish* Religion that was acceptable to God for *itself*, and *its own* Sake, *viz.* the Practice of *moral* Duties ; and that all *instituted* Religion which did not promote and further *These*, or was destitute of them, was so far from being Acts of *true Piety*, that it was *abominable*. You may see this Point largely and accurately handled by Archbishop
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Tillotson, in the second Volume of his Sermons, Page 347. But, I shall mention two or three Things out of the *New Testament* which are a plain and full Confutation of the *Popish* Doctrine on this Head. They hold it lawful to *sacrifice* even their *nearest Relations* to the Good of the *instituted* Part of their Religion, though the greatest Part of it was of mere *Human* Institution, but our Blessed Saviour declares that though a Man's Estate were solemnly *dedicated* to God, such a *Dedication* was no *Dispensation* for not observing the *natural* Duty of relieving necessitous *Parents*; and that even the Observation of the *Sabbath* was to give Place to an Act of *Mercy*. And, when one of his Disciples discovered a *persecuting* Spirit, he rebuked him, telling him that the Spirit of *Christianity* was of a quite different Nature; like its *Author*, who was *Mild, Gentle, Compassionate, Tender*; instead of *Cursing, Blessing*, and *praying* God to *Bless*, and *Forgive* the *Opposers* of his Religion*.

I shall lean a little hard upon your Patience for once, but I hope you will excuse me on this Occasion. But I will be as concise as I can in the Use of another Argument against the *Lawfulness* of those *Means* by which the *Papists* propagate their Religion.

Both *Reason* and *Revelation* agree to tell us, that every *intelligent* Being, *i. e.* every Bi-

D
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* Read over *St. Paul's* Description of *Charity*, and compare it with the *cruel Maxims* and *Practices* of their Church.

ing capable of a *Rule of Action*, must be *obliged*, as far as possible, to copy after the *moral Perfections* of the *Divine Nature*, because the Conduct of *God*, who is Truth itself, must be an *Unerring Rule* to his Creatures. I ask, then, is it consistent with the *moral Perfections* of *God*, whose Nature is *Faithfulness* and *Truth*, who is a *God* that cannot *Lye*, to *Deceive* and *Break his Word*? Now, *Moral Perfection*, or *Moral Rectitude*, is nothing but *Eternal Truth*, and must be the same, as to its *Nature* and *Obligation*, in all *Moral Agents*; so that whatever is inconsistent with the *Moral Perfections* of the *Divine Nature* must be equally inconsistent with *Moral Obligation* in every *Reasonable Being*, since *Reason* is but a Ray of the *Deity*. All the Difference is This. *God* being *Omniscient*, *He* can discern every the least *Deviation* from *Moral Rectitude*, which *we* cannot do; but our *Obligation* must be as extensive as our *Knowledge*.

Or, suppose we turn the Argument the other Way. If it be consistent with *Moral Obligation*, i. e. with *Eternal Rectitude*, in *Man* to *Deceive*, to *Break his Word*, or *Oath*, it must be equally *Consistent* with the *Moral Perfections* of the *Divine Nature* to do the same. And, then, O Gracious *God*! I tremble to think in how deplorable a Condition we, Thy Creatures, are involved; all in utter *Darkness*; *uncertain*, whether we really know any thing at all; whether *Thou*, pardon

don me, O my God, for using this *Blasphemous* Language ! Hast not *Deceived* us in the Use of our *Senses*, in the Use of all our *Intellectual Faculties* ; whether *Thou* wilt not *Deceive* us in respect to all Those Glorious Promises which *Thou* hast made us in the *Christian Covenant* ; whether *Thou*, — But I dare not proceed any farther.

I shall offer but one Thing more, and That is, in respect to *Persecution*, their *grand Means* of promoting their Religion. — Take an Honest, Sincere *Papist*, (and, I trust, there are many such) who not only really Believes his Religion to be *true*, but has used the proper Means of *Information*. Now, would such a One think it consistent with the *Justice* and *Goodness* of God to *Damn* him for not being a *Protestant*, whilst he was *convinced* of the Truth of *Popery* ? Why, then, do They *Torture* and *Murder* and *Curse* Protestants, who cannot believe the *Popish* Religion any more than *Papists* can Believe the *Protestant* Religion to be true ? If they answer that *They* are *sincere*, and *We* are not. This is more than any *Creature* can tell, since Nobody but God can search the *Heart*. Besides, This is what *We*, a *Pagan*, or a *Mahometan*, have as much Right to plead as *They*. Now, if it be contrary to *Justice* and *Goodness* in God to punish *Them* for holding an Opinion upon Evidence that seems to Them to be Good, *Justice* and *Goodness* cannot change their *Nature*, but it must be equally *Cruel*

and *Unjust* in *Them* to punish *Us* in the like Circumstances. — If the *Papists* can answer This Argument, we may safely promise to complain no more of their *Persecutions*.

Having stated the *Popish* Doctrine of *doing Evil that Good may come*, and shewn the Tendency of it towards the Destruction of *Civil Society* and the Subversion of *all Religion*, I could easily prove its mischievous Consequences from known Facts; but, not having Time to run thro' a History of the Conduct of those who maintain this dangerous Position, I shall only suggest some Hints, by Way of *Preservative* against the Attempts of their *Priests* to seduce you.

They are indefatigable in their Endeavours to make Converts. *We* have a better Cause, and I wish I could say, that in general we had imitated their Zeal in the Service of it; for, while we have been careful to make prudent Laws for our *Defence* we have been so remiss in the Execution of them that they have served no other Purpose than to furnish our Enemies with an Handle for Reproach, and an Excuse for their Severities to the *Protestants* in *Popish* Countries*. *They* are exquisitely skill'd

* Our Laws against *Popery* are not intended for the Enforcement of *our Religion*, or as a Penalty upon the *Papists*, on a *Religious* Account, but as a *Preservative* against the Consequences of their Religion upon our *Constitution* and *natural Rights*. Whenever a *Popish Priest* makes a *Convert* he makes an *Enemy* to our *King* and *Country*, and deserves Death as well as any other *Traitor*; which is not the Case of the *Protestants* in *Popish* Countries.

skill'd in all the Arts of Infination and Address, and, tho' I would not advise you to copy after their *serpentine* Craft and Subtilty and Deceit, it is necessary for you to be aware of their Wiles lest they should insnare you. They have a great many good Words and Soft Speeches to make you think well of *their* Communion, and as many bad ones to blacken *ours*. They can with a steady Countenance falsely accuse *us*, or deny the justest Charge against *themselves* and their *Religion*. But, after having told us that it is lawful to *deceive* and *lie*, or do any other *Evil* in the Service of their Cause, it would be the greatest Instance of Folly and Weakness in *you* to *believe* them. And, to convince you that you have just Reason to suspect their good Intentions, I shall mention two or three Observations to you.

1. I appeal to your *common Sense*, whether you have not abundant Reason to distrust the Goodness of a Cause and the Designs of its Advocates, when, in order to be of their Religion, you must make them a Complement of your *Understanding*, that you may be solely at their Disposal. Do but attend a little to the *Absurdity* as well as *Unfairness* of their Conduct. When they are attempting to *convert* you, they consider you as *reasonable* Creatures, and must allow you the *Use* of your Reason that you may judge of the Force of their *Arguments*, or else they argue to no Manner of Purpose, because they never can *convince* you.

And,

And, yet, *immediately after* Conviction, your *Reason* becomes a *deceitful, dangerous* Thing, that is not to be trusted; you must not so much as *look* into the *Rule* of your *Faith* and *Practice*, but you must *implicitly* commit yourself to *their Guidance*. While you are examining whether it be proper to be of their Religion, so long *private Judgment* is a very good Thing, so long they grant you the *Prerogative* of a *Man*; but as soon as you become a *Papist*, you become a *Child* in *leading Strings*, and unless you behave like a very *towardsly* Child you must expect a severe Correction. This is the same preposterous Thing as if they were to send you to *Rome*, and tell you that by the Help of *Maps* and a tolerable Share of *Discretion* you might easily find your Way thither, but advise you, by all Means, as soon as you get there to put out your Eyes and let some trusty faithful *Guide* lead you about all the rest of your Life, for Fear, thro' the natural Weakness of your Sight, you shou'd tumble down a Precipice, or fall into a Ditch.

2. But, before you place too great a Confidence in this *Guide*, you would do wisely to consider his *known Principles* and *Behaviour*, which are not likely to give you the highest Opinion of his *Integrity*. Reflect seriously upon those dangerous and destructive Principles which they hold concerning the *Lawfulness* of committing the greatest imaginable *Wickedness*, if it may be any Ways *instrumental*

tal in promoting their Religion. If the Promotion of their Religion will sanctify *any* Sort of *Evil*, it will equally sanctify *all* Sorts, or *any Degree* of *Evil*. And what kind of a *Religion* must *That* be which pretends to a Power of cancelling *all Natural Religion*, which is the *Foundation* upon which *all Revealed Religion* must be built? Or what Opinion can the most charitable Person entertain of the *Intention* of those who hold such *irreligious Principles*, and put in Practice such *irreligious Methods*? Consider, farther, what Reason you have, from the *Drift* of their Religion, I was going to say to *suspect*, but I may say, to be *morally assur'd*, that they do not intend the *Glory of God* and the *real Good of Mankind*, but their *own temporal Interest*, since it is manifestly calculated to *enrich* and *aggrandize* their *Clergy*, and to *enslave* the *Laity*. And, in order to confirm you in your *Distrust*, if you be not already satisfied, inquire, from *History*, in what Manner they have behav'd where-ever their Religion has been *established*. You need not go beyond the History of *England* for Satisfaction. I would have you take Notice that I do not speak of the Popish *Laity*, who are kept as *ignorant* as possible, but of their *Priests* and *Rulers*.—When I collect all these Considerations into one View, I stand amazed to think how it should be possible for them, for so many Centuries, to persuade so many

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Millions of People to give up their *Senses* and *Reason*, and to suffer themselves to become such *abject Slaves*, where the *Design* of inflaming them is so obvious.

Did it fall within my present *Design*, I could shew that some of their *Doctrines* and some Parts of their *Worship* are such *Insults* upon *Scripture* and *Common Sense* as might naturally *shock* any *Intelligent Person*, but as it would be foreign to my Subject, I shall but just instance in two Particulars. You are required to Believe that the *real Body* and *Blood of Christ*, while resident in *Heaven*, are present upon *Earth* in the *Sacrament*, under the *Appearance* of *real Bread* and *Wine*, (all the *Accidents*, or *Properties* of *Bread* and *Wine* still remaining) in ten thousand different Places at the *same Time*; and that the *whole Body* and *Blood* is present under the *Appearance* of the *Bread* only, and the *whole Body* and *Blood* under the *Appearance* of the *Wine* only, and both eaten and taken into the *Stomach* without being perceived. These *monstrous Absurdities* you must Believe, if you can; and if you cannot, you must, nevertheless, *profess* the Belief of Them, if you be of their *Communion*.

The other Particular is, *Creature-Worship*. Now, if there be any one Thing plainly expressed in the *Bible* it is, that all *Creature-Worship* is *Idolatry*, and that all *Idolatry* is *prohibited*; that the *one God only* is to be *Worshiped*, because nothing can be entitled

to *Aderation* but the *Divine Nature*; and that the Idolatry of the *Jews*, for which They were so often and so severely punished, did not consist in their Worshipping the Idols of the Heathens, *exclusive* of the *One Supreme God*, the God of *Israel*, but for paying *Divine Worship* to any other Object besides the One God, together with Him; so that if you become a *Papist*, you must be a *gross Idolator*, and live in the daily Practice of one of the most provoking Sins.

Thus I have endeavoured to expose the *Means* which the *Church of Rome* makes Use of; and now, to conclude, let me advise you, let me conjure you, to keep yourselves at the greatest Distance from the Use of any *indirect* Means, on any Account whatsoever. According to the best Observations that I have been able to make, the most upright Persons are too apt to fall into Them. I do not mean, into such *profligate* Measures as are practised in the *Church of Rome* to the Scandal of *Christianity* and the Disgrace of *Human Nature*, but into Means, though *less* Evil and Sinful, yet inconsistent with the strict Rules, of our Holy Religion, and the Example of its Author. *Wisdom*, unless guarded with the utmost Caution, will slide sometimes imperceptibly into *worldly Craft*, into *Dissimulation*, and *Insincerity*. But *Christian Simplicity* disowns every *Kind* and *Degree* of them.

A good Christian ought to be, in his *Intentions* and *Conduct*, like *Nathanael* and his Master, *without Guile*.

But, *indirect Means* are not only contrary to the Precepts of Christianity and the Example of *Christ*, but they carry a *blasphemous* Implication along with them; a *tacit* Impeachment either of the *Power*, or *Wisdom* of God; as if he were not able to give Success to our good Designs in a Manner consistent with his moral Perfections and the Revelation of his Will. Consider, that *God* is a Being of purer Eyes than to behold the least Iniquity with Approbation; that this *holy* Being *knows* every Thing, and can *do* every Thing that is *possible* to be done. As *we*, by a single Act of *Volition* can move a Limb, so *God*, by a single Act of *his* Will, can move and direct the whole material and immaterial World to serve what Purposes he pleases. Let us then be careful to approve our *Designs* and *Conduct* to this *good, wise, and powerful* Governor of the World; let us devoutly beg his Assistance, with a firm Trust and Confidence in him; and we may be always assured of as much Success as it is proper for us to have.

To Him be ascribed all Honour, &c. Amen.

F I N I S.

